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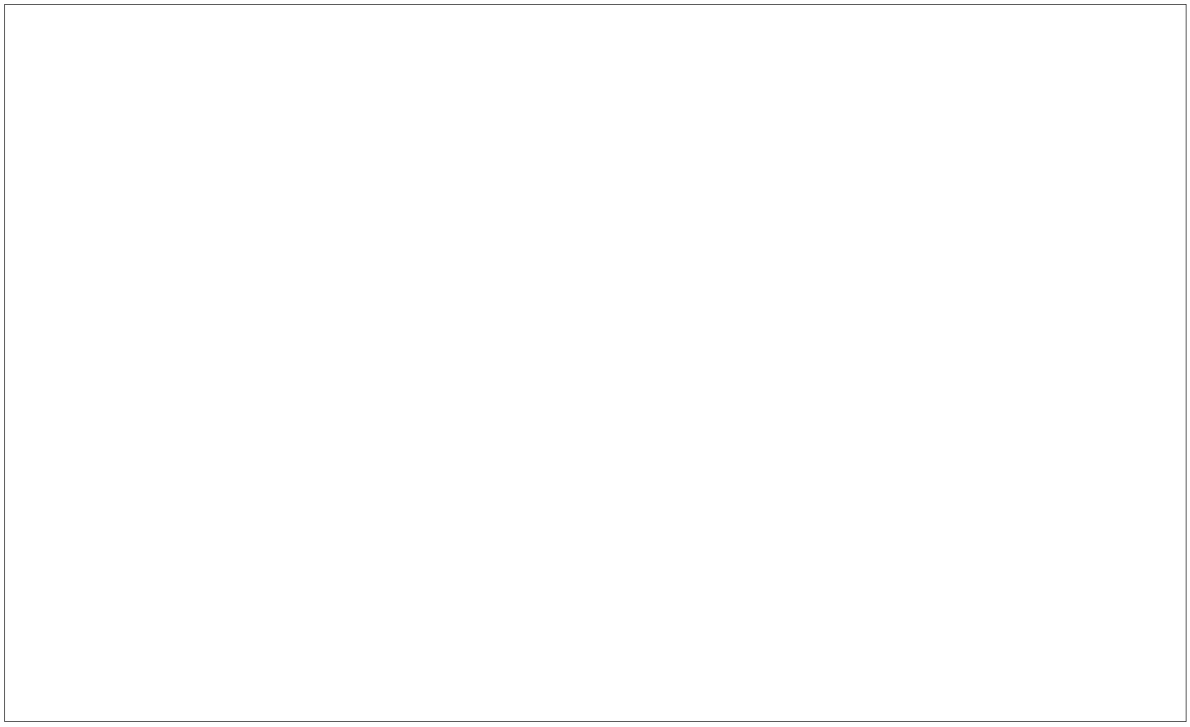

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ARGENTINA-OAS

Argentine Foreign Minister Alberto Vignes announced yeterday that the inter-American foreign ministers' meeting, scheduled for March in Buenos Aires, has been postponed indefinitely. Vignes cited the tense atmosphere created by the US Trade Reform Act as the reason for putting off the meeting.

Last Friday, a special session of the OAS permanent council issued a resolution declaring that the trade act violated commitments the US had made to developing countries and recommending further discussion at the next OAS General Assembly in April. Several Latin governments have expressed strong reservations about conducting the hemispheric dialogue in sporadic meetings of the foreign ministers.

Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez has argued that any issue between Latin countries and the US should be discussed only in the OAS where, he says, "Agreements are more binding." [redacted] 3.5(c)

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ARGENTINA

President Peron and her adviser Jose Lopez Rega

The military's concern over the steadily expanding power of presidential adviser Jose Lopez Rega may soon bring the issue to a head.

According to the US embassy, the three armed forces commanders met with the defense minister last week to protest Lopez Rega's excessive influence in the government. We have no information that the military high command has issued any ultimatum, but the possibility of demands being made on President Peron is greater now than at any time since she assumed office last year.

President Peron is resting at an Atlantic beach resort. Her absence from the capital has probably stimulated speculation that Lopez Rega, alone, is running the government--a conclusion that may not be too far off the mark. Her reliance on the controversial minister is increasing alarm in Peronist labor and opposition political circles.

Prominent opposition leader Ricardo Balbin reportedly has taped a TV interview in which he denounces recent heavy-handed actions by the government and criticizes the concentration of power within the newly created presidential secretariat headed by Lopez Rega. The embassy reports that Balbin's party has been in contact with armed forces leaders during the past few weeks and that they may have agreed to a joint stand against the President's key adviser.

If Mrs. Peron does not make some gesture soon to curb Lopez Rega's authority, she may well be headed for a confrontation with the power groups she needs most to guarantee support for her government. 3.5(c)

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